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Photograph of the month

Curved columnar jointing in Somoskő (Hungary). Somoskő (in Hungarian and Šomoška in Slovak) is a well-known site of columnar jointed basalt, on the Slovak–Hungarian border, on which sits the castle of the same name. The outcrop exposes the neck under the former crater of the maar dated to the Early Pliocene (Hetényi et al., 2012, Bulletin of Volcanology, 74, 457, doi:10.1007/s00445-011-0534-4). The neck is ~160 m in diameter and asymmetric; its eastern side exhibits slender and curved columns as shown on the photograph (a side of the scaling white square is 40-cm long). Columnar jointing is generally explained by the volume reduction associated to lava solidification during cooling. This outcrop suggests long-lived curved isotherms, perpendicular to the column direction, and refine our vision of columnar jointing as a dynamic process in response to boundary conditions of cooling in a complex geometry. Location: 48°10'18.7"N, 19°51'28.6"E. Photograph Benoît Taisne and György Hetényi. Submitted by Fanny Garel (Imperial College London, Cardiff University), György Hetényi (ETH Zürich), Benoît Taisne (Earth Observatory of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University) and Étienne Médard (University of Clermont-Ferrand).

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